

TO: The Federal Communications Commission  
FROM: San Juan Unified School District  
RE: CC Docket No. 02-06  
Date: September 15, 2008

The Technology Services Department of the San Juan Unified School District hereby lends its strong support to the proposed addition of "telephone broadcast messaging" to the list of services eligible for support under the schools and libraries ("E-rate") program.

It is well-settled that improving communications between and among educators, students, and parents can play a vital role in improving educational performance in elementary and secondary schools. Telephone broadcast messaging offers significant advantages and benefits over the less efficient means which schools traditionally used to reach out to students and parents, such as hand-delivered written notices and phone tree messages.

Telephone broadcast messaging is typically used as a means of contacting parents regarding absent or truant students, thereby facilitating increased classroom attendance. Telephone broadcast messaging can also be used to notify and inform parents of testing schedules, parent/teacher conferences, and to otherwise increase participation by parents in their children's education.

A further and significant benefit of telephone broadcast messaging is that it can provide an important emergency response resource in the event of weather-related events, health or other civil emergencies, or other incidents that require schools to lock down or transfer students to safe locations. As an example, Coyle Avenue Elementary School, in the San Juan Unified School District, was ordered into "Lockdown" by law enforcement on Friday, September 5. A parolee and his pit bull were at large in the neighborhood. Principal Dianna Batt at approximately 12:10 pm notified parents of the lockdown, immediately reassuring them that their children were safe and that Coyle was in lockdown as a precautionary measure. She asked parents to not come on campus due to the lockdown. Principal Batt notified parents again at about 1:45pm that Coyle was not in danger and students were being sheltered in place (not allowed to roam on campus, but instruction continues). Parents were told they would need to come to school at dismissal time to sign out their children. The school did not want students walking in the neighborhood with a parolee and pit bull still at large. So, 480 parents received emergency messages which communicated specific safety instructions to them. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to contact parents about this emergency situation. We would have needed to depend on mass radio and TV broadcasts to reach parents and those reports would have been confusing and not nearly as fast to reach families. The ConnectED system provided a school with immediate phone

access to parents in this emergency. Parents greatly appreciated the timely and accurate communication.

In enacting the E-rate program in 1996, Congress recognized that many schools and libraries have limited resources that constrain their access to emerging technologies that can enhance and support their educational mission. Telephone broadcast messaging, which allows schools to more efficiently and effectively communicate with students and parents, is a prime example of such an emerging technology and should be included within the E-rate program's list of eligible services.

Sincerely,

Oswaldo Galarza  
Director, Technology Services  
Technology Services Department  
San Juan Unified School District